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SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE 87-02 -- SOVIET INTENTIONS
IN AFGHANISTAN

WITH CONTINUED PUBLICITY SURROUNDING NEW INITIATIVES ON
AFGHANISTAN, PROMULGATED FROM EARLY 1987, IT WILL BE OF USE
TO USIS OFFICERS TO HAVE AT HAND A RECENT AND THOROUGH
ANALYSIS OF SOVIET UNION ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS REGARDING
THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY IT CONTINUES TO OCCUPY.

USIA HAS ALREADY RECEIVED REPORTS OF FAVORABLE USAGE OF THE
EARLIER FIRST PUBLIC THEMES -- A STATEMENT OF U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY ON AFGHANISTAN. THE BELOW DELINEATED THEMES HAVE BEEN
SUBJECTED TO A RIGOROUS HIGH-LEVEL POLICY SCRUTINY. THEY
SHOULD BE EMPLOYED BY USIS FIELD OFFICERS FOR INFORMATION AND
DISCUSSION PURPOSES.

SOVIET POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

(A) A NEW LANGUAGE

-THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN SPEAKING A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE ON
AFGHANISTAN IN RECENT MONTHS. SOME SOVIET OFFICIALS NOW
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR 1979 INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN WAS A
MISTAKE AND THAT MOSCOW INTENDS TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AS
EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

-IN FEBRUARY 1986, BEFORE THE 27TH PARTY CONGRESS, GENERAL
SECRETARY GORBACHEV DESCRIBED SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN
AFGHANISTAN AS A "BLEEDING WOUND." ON JULY 28 OF THAT YEAR,
IN A SPEECH AT VLADIVOSTOK, GORBACHEV ANNOUNCED THAT THE
KABUL REGIME WOULD PURSUE A POLICY OF "NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION" THAT WOULD BROADEN THE REGIME'S POLITICAL
BASE TO INCLUDE OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT
THE USSR WOULD WITHDRAW SIX REGIMENTS FROM AFGHANISTAN AS A
"STIMULUS" FOR A SETTLEMENT.

-FOREIGN MINISTER SHEVARDNADZE AND PARTY SECRETARY DOBRYNIN
TRAVELED TO KABUL IN JANUARY 1987 TO UNDERSCORE MOSCOW'S
SUPPORT FOR "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION." SHEVARDNADZE INSISTED
THAT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT RESULTING IN WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET
TROOPS WAS CONTINGENT ON WHAT HE TERMED "CESSATION OF OUTSIDE
INTERFERENCE," I.E., EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE AFGHAN FREEDOM
FIGHTERS.

-THE SOVIET "PEACE OFFENSIVE" HAS ATTRACTED WIDE MEDIA
ATTENTION, LEADING TO SOME SPECULATION THAT THE KREMLIN HAS
CHANGED ITS COURSE ON AFGHANISTAN.

(B) SHORTCOMINGS OF SOVIET POLICY

-"NATIONAL RECONCILIATION": THIS MOST RECENT INITIATIVE FROM
MOSCOW FALLS FAR SHORT OF A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD BE
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ACCEPTABLE TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE IN THAT IT IS LIMITED TO COSMETIC REGIME-BROADENING AND RETENTION OF REAL POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE ALLIANCE HAS REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND ACCOMPANYING OFFERS BY NABUL OF A CEASE-FIRE AND AMNESTY FOR THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE UNPOPULAR REGIME. THE ALLEGED CEASE-FIRE, IN ANY EVENT, IS MEANINGLESS SINCE MOSCOW HAS MADE NO COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AND SOVIET REGIME FORCES HAVE CONTINUED TO CARRY OUT MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE RESISTANCE. MOREOVER, THE FIVE MILLION AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN AND IRAN HAVE NOT TAKEN UP THE REGIME'S INVITATION TO RETURN HOME. THE SO-CALLED "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION" INITIATIVE SIDESTEPS THE KEY ISSUE OF PROMPT AND COMPLETE SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE AFGHAN PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURE. THE RESISTANCE PARTIES HAVE PROPOSED ELECTION OF AN ASSEMBLY WHICH WOULD PREPARE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS FOLLOWING SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS: AFTER REJECTING NAJIB'S CEASE FIRE CALL, THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE STEPPED UP ITS EFFORTS DURING THE TRADITIONAL WINTER LULL. THEIR ABILITY TO COUNTER SOVIET AND DRA AIR POWER CONTINUES TO GROW. THE SOVIET AND REGIME FORCES QUICKLY VIOLATED THEIR OWN CEASE-FIRE AND MOUNTED SEVERAL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS. ASSOCIATED AIR ATTACKS ON PAKISTAN CAUSED UNPRECEDENTED CASUALTIES. SOVIET REPRISAL ATTACKS NORTH OF THE HINDU KUSH TRIGGERED AN OUTFLOW OF REFUGEES FROM RELATIVELY NEW AREAS OF AFGHANISTAN. MOSCOW'S OCTOBER 1986 TROOP WITHDRAWAL WAS LARGELY A SHAM. UNITS THAT WERE WITHDRAWN HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN FROM THE USSR JUST BEFORE THE PULL-OUT.

-SOVIETIZATION: SOVIET EFFORTS TO BUILD A SUBSERVIENT STATE IN AFGHANISTAN AND TO DEVELOP LOYAL CADRE THROUGH INDOCTRINATION CONTINUE. AFGHAN CHILDREN CONTINUE TO BE TAKEN TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR STUDY. A SEPARATE SOVIET EFFORT TO TRAIN CHILDREN TO SPY ON AND SABOTAGE THE RESISTANCE HAS HAD SOME IMPACT, ACCORDING TO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

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-GHEREVA PROXIMITY TALKS: DURING THE LATEST ROUND OF THE PROXIMITY TALKS FEBRUARY-MARCH 1987, WHICH DIRECTLY INVOLVE PAKISTAN AND THE KABUL REGIME, THE SOVIETS PROPOSED, THROUGH THE KABUL REPRESENTATIVE AT THE TALKS, A TROOP WITHDRAWAL TIME FRAME OF EIGHTEEN MONTHS. ALTHOUGH AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE ORIGINAL FOUR-YEAR TIMETABLE OFFER, THE EIGHTEEN MONTH PROPOSAL STILL SEEMS DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE KABUL REGIME TO ACHIEVE A MILITARY VICTORY OVER THE RESISTANCE, WHOSE LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE COMPOUNDED DURING THE WITHDRAWAL PERIOD. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN HAS EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR A WITHDRAWAL TIME FRAME BASED ON LOGISTICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

GC) SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

DOES MOSCOW'S NEW LANGUAGE ON AFGHANISTAN SIGNAL A REAL CHANGE IN POLICY OR IS IT SIMPLY AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF A SOVIET-DOMINATED AFGHANISTAN BY DIFFERENT, MORE ADROIT, MEANS? CERTAINLY, CONTINUING EFFORTS BY THE SOVIETS TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR PRESENCE, THE SOVIETIZATION CAMPAIGN, ONGOING MILITARY OPERATIONS RESULTING IN SEVERE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND THE INCREASED BORDER ATTACKS AND SABOTAGE LAUNCHED AGAINST PAKISTAN DO NOT INDICATE PEACEFUL INTENTIONS BY MOSCOW. MOST IMPORTANT IS THE ISSUE OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL. SO FAR, MOSCOW HAS PROPOSED UNACCEPTABLE WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLES AND INSISTED ON RETENTION OF A UNIVERSALLY UNPOPULAR REGIME IN KABUL. NONETHELESS, THE RECENT MORE FLEXIBLE STATEMENTS FROM MOSCOW ON AFGHANISTAN ARE SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGING. WHETHER THEY REFLECT AN EVOLUTION OF THINKING IN THE KREMLIN AND WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION IN THE COMING MONTHS CAN ACCEPT GENUINE SELF-DETERMINATION BY THE AFGHAN PEOPLE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EXPEDITIOUS AND COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS, HOWEVER, REMAIN TO BE SEEN. (P/G)
STONE, ACTING
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